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ABSTRACT

The new journal "Teaching Education" is designed to improve instruction in schools, colleges, and departments of education. In order both to furnish a context for first person examinations of teaching strategies and to help legitimate scholarly discussion about classroom work among education faculty, the journal includes narratives on significant historical figures in the field, descriptions, and explanations of what professors attempt to accomplish in their college classes, and ruminations on their impact on students. By placing themselves firmly within the tradition of praxis, the editors of "Teaching Education" attempt to steer a middle course between theoretical discourse divorced from classroom work and simplistic "how-to" teaching techniques uninformed by historical sensibility or principled thinking. Fifty-three subjects, contributors to the first two volumes of the journal and the board of editors, were surveyed to determine their opinions of the journal's overall value, aesthetic value, content worth, and institutional legitimacy. Results (based on a 55% response rate) indicated generally positive responses in all areas. (Seven footnotes are included, and 18 references and two surveys with answers are appended.) (Author/MS)

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Influencing Praxis through Scholarship: *Teaching Education*

by

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Introduction

The new journal *Teaching Education* is designed to improve instruction in schools, colleges, and departments of education. In order to both furnish a context for first person examinations of teaching strategies and to help legitimate scholarly discussions about classroom work among education faculty, the journal includes narratives on significant historical figures in the field, descriptions and explanations of what professors attempt to accomplish in their college classes, and ruminations on their impact on students. By placing themselves firmly within the tradition of praxis, the editors of *Teaching Education* attempt to steer a middle course between theoretical discourse divorced from classroom work and simplistic "how-to" teaching techniques uninformed by historical sensibility or principled thinking.

In keeping with *Teaching Education* "verstehen," or concerned with providing the sort of personal understanding required for intelligent instruction, this paper begins with an account of the origins, need for, and implementation of the journal. It concludes by discussing a survey which solicited recommendations from contributors and the board of editors. Like the articles in the journal, the essential emphasis in this paper is on understanding the editors' personal experience of praxis in a teacher education setting.

Origins

In the winter of 1983, two professors of education were browsing the miscellaneous periodicals which, unclaimed by any specialized campus library, are housed in the university's main facility. After an undetermined amount of time had passed, the emeritus professor handed a copy of *Teaching Sociology* to his former student. The conversation which followed is easily reconstructed.

"A journal aimed to improving instruction in the discipline of sociology."

"An excellent idea. I wonder if others exist. Is there one in education?"

"Not that I know of..."

Subsequent inquiries revealed that comparable publications were available in philosophy, psychology, political science and in a cross-disciplinary mode--*Improving College and University Teaching*. Oddly enough, the field of education was not represented, even though it has the most direct interest in this topic.

Some months later, the two professors attended the Lilly Conference on College Teaching, an annual event at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, and heard more than a dozen faculty, acclaimed for their teaching and their strategies of curricular and instructional design. Most of what they said was impressive and appeared to carry meaning for all teaching faculty in attendance. Frequent allusions to the journal *Teaching Psychology* were made and those from departments of psychology seemed clearly at the vanguard of scholarly efforts to advance teaching in higher education. Those with a specialty in higher education as an academic field of study had no discernible profile at the conference.

Shortly thereafter a third colleague, and one acquainted with the others' informal study in this area, accepted a professorship and carried

with him to his new post a hypothesis they had by now been discussing: *that educators should be providing leadership in the advancement of college and university teaching and that the discipline should be appropriately represented among publications treating this specialty.*

Faculty and administrators at his institution, The University of South Carolina, agreed with this judgment and allocated funds to launch a journal which would draw on the expertise of educators in improving the curricular and instructional methodology of higher education. In the initial proposal for the journal several guidelines were established: (1) As a refereed journal, *Teaching Education* would strive for fine scholarship and usefulness in writing about teaching, particularly in schools, colleges and departments of education; (2) *Teaching Education* would convey a historical sensibility, striving to preserve and transmit the culture of teaching in SCDE's; (3) *Teaching Education* would aspire to excellence in graphic design and presentation; and (4) *Teaching Education* would be subsidized in order to promote individual, as well as institutional, subscription.

Need

While this institutional sponsorship was being pursued, the three educators who were eventually to become *Teaching Education's* editors were meeting to arrive at a plan for reaching their overarching goals. Among these were that **education should have a more accurate and positive image across the academic world and with the public at large.** Some analysts have concluded that bias against educators is rooted in the characteristic class origins of arts and science faculty versus that of professors of education (Lanier, 1986). Others highlight the antagonisms within the discipline itself, with teachers and prospective teachers on one side and education professors on the other. The problem becomes one of the lower relative status of the world of "doing" versus

that of "knowing" (Schrag, 1981). Other explanations are possible, but, clearly, from before the era of Arthur Bestor's (1953) criticisms to those of E. D. Hirsch (1987) and others, the public profile of educators has been ready for improvement.

A correlate to this first perceived need is that educators' own opinions of their discipline and work must be elevated. The motives, traditions and significance of education should place it in the highest rank of professions. The merit of this claim may not, however, be the arbiter of its fulfillment and acceptance in the academy. From the publication of the political and non-scholarly¹ report *A Nation at Risk* to the present, educators have sustained heavy criticism which has been infrequently and ineffectively answered. On one hand, prominent professional organizations of educators like AACTE have made little discernible impact on the mass media or among legislators and governors if we are to judge by the flow of policy in New Jersey, Texas and other venues and statements of federal policy as in those of William Bennett, Secretary of Education. On the other, the quick-fix teacher testing movement continues, driven by vested interests like ETS. Without forceful resistance from the psychometricians in our colleges of education, who know well the limitations and potential misuse of these instruments for political and economic advantage, the debate over proper accountability will continue to be trivialized. Such unwarranted and inappropriate quiescence by educators is evidence of our inability to exercise the prerogatives our traditions and societal standing grant us. The new journal would attempt to remedy this situation through the voices of education faculty.

It was further concluded that there were a number of **substantive problems** toward which professionals in our field might be making more effective responses. First, Terrel Bell's claims about the "dumbing down" of K-12 textbooks is not without merit, though the blame may most

properly be placed on the relationship between publishers and textbook approval agencies of government rather than on professional educators (Apple, 1986: Coser, Kadushin & Powell, 1982). An extension of the former secretary of education's argument to texts in teacher education--as in elementary social studies²--does identify our own cadre as often responsible for weak adoptions. The quality of teacher education curriculum was, therefore, identified as an area of concern for the journal.

Second, a chronic attitude of ahistoricity has plagued educators throughout the century (Kliebard, 1986: Mattingly, 1975) with predictable consequences, e.g., a tendency toward faddishness, a lack of perseverance in reform efforts, insufficient professional standing borne from well-recognized professional traditions. This counter-productive point of view is particularly ironic, given the documented record of education in western civilization and our investment in foundations of education as a sub-discipline. Clearly we concede a base of pride and power when we fail to employ and recognize the history of education.³

Another recognizable problem area in education is defining our knowledge base. By now some are undoubtedly weary of hearing the term mentioned, though the issue far antedates this terminology. Naming the problem has in fact been a necessary step in the process of resolution. Every study, it is said, is relevant to education either as a discipline to be taught or as a source of pedagogical knowledge (Highet, 1966). Given such a condition, one is easily overwhelmed in the process of devising a realistic, limited curriculum. This epistemological dilemma is aggravated by the relevance of particular theories to a number of sub-disciplines within education. For example, who doubts that the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives or Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development are appropriate in courses treating special methods, general methods, evaluation, curriculum and so on. As a consequence of our inherent

definitional difficulty, educators draw criticism for either neglect or duplication of treatment in such components of the knowledge base.

Given ongoing efforts by colleges and universities to limit their budgets in education programs and focus resources elsewhere, **economic inequity** reflects and aggravates the preceding problems. We are all familiar with the idea that education can be exploited through high FTE which generates tuition at a dramatic rate that is not returned to the SCDE. This phenomenon is manifested not only in proportionately smaller budgets, but also through lower rates of compensation for professors of education, higher student-faculty ratios, heavy loads (instructional-supervision- governance), non-terminal degree hires, etc. To put it simply and directly, professional training in education is not funded at a per capita rate commensurate with other undergraduate professional studies.⁴

These three general areas summarize our analysis of the areas of need the new journal was to address.

Implementation

The pursuit of these aspirations caused the editors to be deeply involved in the design process of *Teaching Education*. Graphic quality in the publication was seen as vital to effecting the attitudinal changes we had targeted among educators and non-educators. The editors also believe in the power of aesthetics and sought to employ that resource in behalf of their goals. Proceeding from such analysis the graphic designer developed a scheme which combined the appropriate conventions of scholarly journals and popular magazines. Screens, white space and photographs were liberally incorporated. A presentation ("coffee table") format was developed, since they hoped to find a place the journal "off the shelf" and on the tables and desks of faculty and administrators who share an

interest and pride in our profession. With the intention of changing attitudes as well as improving instruction, the challenge was to communicate both through prose content and aesthetic quality.

A number of other format elements emerged in the planning. A section entitled "Reflections" would include broad statements about teaching and learning, often by non-educators, which would appeal to the widest audiences and typically incorporate an historical tone. The body of the publication would present "Teaching Profiles" of outstanding educators, normally written by their now accomplished students and recalling in personalized detail the particular pedagogical gifts of distinguished professors of education. Also in this central section would be "Contemporary Course Descriptions" by teaching faculty reporting on their best efforts in seminars, field work and classrooms. "Images of the Field" would draw on the Curriculum Photo Archives⁵ and other photographic sources to add faces to the names mentioned elsewhere in the text. Through this section the editors hoped to apply their knowledge about multisensory learning to the task of promoting our discipline's history. Other photographs, organized on a separate thematic line, would grace the remainder of the journal. Finally, in keeping with an appreciation of the importance of non-print as well as print resources, the "Review" section would, in addition to the printed word, evaluate software, films, videotapes, testing instruments and a range of other published materials with their instructional use in mind.

As a final element of the implementation planning, a commitment was made to keep subscription prices low and to promote individual purchase and wide dispersion. The editors' desire was to reach educators in great numbers in their homes and offices and not to be primarily a library document.

The Survey: Overview

When *Teaching Education* was still in the planning stages, the editors invited a senior professor to write a personal reflection on his mentor. In making the invitation, the editors discussed the niche the journal would attempt to fill in the world of scholarship, why this practical role had been unaddressed in an applied field like education, and to solicit the professor's views. To their dismay, the reply was neither an acceptance nor a blessing: "I see the establishment of this journal as a diversionary tactic in the long term strategy to improve the conditions of life in this country, indeed, the whole world." Although this professor enjoyed reflecting back upon his days with his mentor and characterized him as a model faculty member, he stated that the energies of education faculty would be better spent writing to people who do not yet share the social images necessary for educating children and youth in our society, rather than writing for education journals or "speaking to ourselves."

To assess whether this view was representative or whether *Teaching Education* was serving a useful purpose, a survey (see appendix) was sent to all those who contributed to Volume I, Numbers 1 and 2, and the board of editors (n=53; 55% rate of return). The questions were of two basic types: one category referred to the technical concerns, such as thoroughness of editing, timeliness of correspondence, etc.; the second category treated the quality of the journal's scholarship, whether praxis-oriented writing was institutionally sanctioned, and ideas for advancing the journal.

Interestingly enough, the responses to the survey tend to refute the aforementioned professor's assessment. At a more implicit level of analysis, they do agree there are too many journals in education and, moreover, that the journals do not systematically examine core issues of praxis in schools, colleges and departments of education. Most are either

devoted to the purpose of elementary/secondary teachers and administrators keeping themselves informed about new practices and programs or to education faculty talking to each other about theoretical issues. At an explicit level, the respondents indicate that education as a discipline needs more scholarship like that contained in *Teaching Education*. In other words, the journal was indeed meeting the need of college and university faculty concerned with their own teaching and serving as a network for tying together faculty from diverse settings.

The Survey: Journal Format

The design of the journal elicited the most varied response. While the majority agreed that it was highly attractive and appealed to a wide audience, some felt that such "glossiness" makes it look like a less scholarly publication than it actually is. Too much concern with aesthetic matters might mean the journal will succeed only with the non-professional audience. In making its way into the hands of the general public in an attempt to build a more productive image of educators, *Teaching Education* may have to sacrifice its vision of being a vehicle for transformative dialogue on praxis among college faculty. It was suggested that resources might be better spent in publishing the journal more frequently and expanding its content, while maintaining the same aesthetic appeal, e.g., cut down the margins, use less glossy paper, etc.

The Survey: Journal Content

Reponses in this area were suggestive of contradictory impulses in the field of education. Words like "stimulating" and "unique" frequently occurred. The journal was also commended for being one which is read when it arrives, rather than being held aside or merely "thumbed through." Some respondents had difficulty associating scholarship with the articles in *Teaching Education*. Thus, while the comments supported the journal's commitment to personal and specific discussions of the practice of teaching teachers and those faculty interested in reflection as a means of improving their teaching, a hesitancy in using the term scholarship seemed to confirm some of the fears that led to the journal's creation. While several other higher education disciplines appear to take their teaching quite seriously, those of us in the field of education are still a bit embarrassed about entering into this kind of dialogue and calling it scholarship.

With respect to usefulness, the respondents' comments were highly favorable. Some were using the varied content to revitalize dormant interests in education's subdisciplines and to develop renewed awareness of the richness of education as a field of study. Others were experimenting with *Teaching Education's* photographs and articles in their work with students. Books, articles and films which were alluded to in "Contemporary Course Descriptions" and "Media Reviews" had been ordered in a number of cases.

The journal was also considered useful because personal narratives allow for in depth examinations of college classrooms. To some extent this is a new phenomenon since most of such attention has previously been

directed at our colleagues in basic education. It was suggested that contributors should be given more space to explain their course aims and the theoretical underpinnings of these aims. Longer articles would also allow education faculty to not only focus on the intentional dimension of teaching, but more importantly, the success dimension as well (Scheffler, 1971). In this vein, reference could be made to Jesse Goodman's seminal piece, "Teaching Preservice Teachers a Critical Approach to Curriculum Design: A Descriptive Account" (1986), which could well serve as a model for the type of reasoned analysis considered appropriate for *Teaching Education*.⁶ It seems only appropriate that education faculty serve as examples of understanding how existing work conditions and institutional policies in higher education encourage and obstruct principled educational aims (Liston, 1987).

The Survey: Institutional Sanctions

Responses in this category indicate that the type of discourse contained in *Teaching Education* is institutionally legitimized. The vast majority of the respondents indicated that their institutions valued highly the sharing of one's teaching practices with other professionals on a national and international basis. The following statement is representative: *"As one who has served on tenure and promotion committees, I would give tremendous weight to such participation because it is really participation in faculty development."*

Given these responses from prominent faculty at some of our country's most esteemed institutions, one is drawn back to the initial question: Why aren't scholarly discussions of teaching practice more commonly undertaken by educators? One solution may be to involve public school people who are increasingly interested in ways to teach teachers and in examples of good instruction. A second may well be that *Teaching Education* is part of a new movement in praxis and its unusual style of

scholarship will eventually be the rule, rather than the exception.

Conclusion

The first page of text in volume 1, number 1, of *Teaching Education* is entitled "Credo," a statement of purpose by the editors. The focus of the Credo is a pledge that the new journal will attend both to scholarship and to effecting reform. Due to the perceived need for educators to call their traditions to prominence and use, reference is made to the preservation and transmission of historical ideas and practices, both for their occasional current utility and for their establishment of a proud professional context in which educators can work.⁷

Teaching Education was conceived for the purpose of **improving instruction in schools, colleges and departments of education**, though, at the same time, the Credo disclaims "recipes and models to be emulated." The journal is to be a site of reflection rather than prescription and will promote fine practice through the interplay of analysis with description. In the editors' words, "...in this way we may bring to the profession ideas that temper tradition with innovation, freedom with responsibility, logic with commitment and vision with utility."

The Credo emerges from the needs analysis given heretofore, specifically addressing the better use of the resources educators command currently and the development of a stronger, more positive professional self image. As we work toward these goals it is assumed that our profile beyond schools, colleges and departments of education will be improved and from that will follow, among other benefits, our required, fair share of institutional resources. *Teaching Education* is attempting to help educators reach these aspirations.

1. In addition to questions about the constitution of the commission, the authors' suspicions about the methodology behind *A Nation at Risk* were reinforced by conversations with a high education official who reported the last-minute efforts to assemble a report on education by two non-educators from a massive collection of research reported in abbreviated fashion at the commission's several hearings.

2. The authors have served as reviewers of social studies methods texts and surveyed the field for adoptions. We believe this area of publication dramatically illustrates the lack of substance in some pedagogical texts. *Exceptions include work by A. Ellis, D. Welton and J. Mallan (1988) and J. Banks and A. Clegg (1985).*

3. The authors' content analysis of the Pennsylvania Teacher Certification Testing Program Professional Knowledge test (an ETS clone of the NTE) revealed very few history of education questions, none prior to the American national period, none from other than American education and no allusion to Mann or Dewey or any other historical figures.

4. In the mid-1970's Ohio's Department of Education arrived at a figure of \$1000 per year per student as the shortfall in funds for teacher education as compared with other undergraduate professional fields. This figure can be adjusted for inflation to arrive at a contemporary discrepancy.

5. The Curriculum Photo Archives are housed at the Museum of Education, University of South Carolina.

6. The articles by Cohn, Gellman & Tom (1987) and Wood (1987) present analyses of course goals and the clash with divergent, more narrowly practical objectives of students and practicing teachers.

7. John Goodlad's *Wilbur Cohen Lecture* at AACTE's Annual Meeting (1988) eloquently described the resistance of non-educators to evidence of the quality of scholarship in education. *This occurred even when high quality was substantiated by non-educators' own analyses of education dissertations and other research documents.* His conclusion was that educators must proceed to set and meet their own standards and not be reactive to the intractable biases of others.

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Appendices

Craig Kridel, Paul Klohr, Paul Shaker

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5. Do you have any reactions which are specific to the sections of IE--"Reflections, Teaching Profiles and Contemporary Course Descriptions, Images of the Field, Reviews"?

6. Is IE conveying an appropriate point of view and framework of values and ones in keeping with its Credo?

7. How can we foster wider distribution of the journal?

8. Other comments.

Date _____

FYI: IE will be presenting Division K and B sessions at AERA1988.

Teaching Education: Survey of Board of Editors

In order to benefit from the analyses of the board of editors, Teaching Education is conducting a survey and review of its first year of publication. Please respond frankly to these questions and add other comments as you wish. A similar instrument will circulate to our contributors. Return by January 1, 1988, is requested.

Craig Kridel, Paul Klohr, Paul Shaker

1. Comment on the mechanics of publication: schedule, length, design, editing, etc.

2. How do you judge the content of TE, both in terms of scholarship and usefulness?

3. Describe whether you believe publication in TE is of benefit to contributors in tenure, promotion and salary deliberations.

4. Do you have any reactions which are specific to the sections of TE—"Reflections, Teaching Profiles and Contemporary Course Descriptions, Images of the Field, Reviews"?

5. Is TE conveying an appropriate point of view and framework of values and ones in keeping with its Credo?

6. How can we foster wider distribution?

7. Other comments.

Date _____

FYI:TE will be presenting Division K and B sessions at AERA1988.

Appendix ATeaching Education: Survey of Board of Editors

1. Comment on the mechanics of publication: Schedules, length, design, editing, etc.
 - The design and editing are superb. It is really impossible to separate the pictures from the writer's reflection or the design contributes to--indeed is a good part of--the content. I am thinking particularly of the articles which offered us the opportunity to look into our own historical experience.
 - One of the most attractively designed publications in education. It should be expanded into a quarterly.
 - Beautiful one of the most artistic publications I've seen.
2. How do you judge the content of TE, both in terms of scholarship and usefulness?
 - Of the highest quality, I am particularly interested in the experiences of our predecessors; reading about them can help us build on past experience.
 - Profiles are a great contribution to curriculum history and history of education generally. Nobody else does film reviews in education on a regular basis. Course descriptions are useful and well presented.
 - Scholarship seems adequate and the historical setting is most useful. It's hard to get your hands on authentic first hand material from the history of education, and Teaching Education can fill a real gap.
3. Describe whether you believe publication in TE is of benefit to contributors in tenure, promotion, and salary deliberations.
 - There can be no more important contribution than sharing one's teaching practices with other professionals on the scale that TE makes possible--a national or even international basis. As one who has served on tenure and promotions committees I would give tremendous weight to such a contribution (it is really participation in faculty development)
 - No, that's why they are writing for you its probably not going to be worth writing or reading. You will get better material with the emphasis you now give to the history than you would get by the usual educational writing. But the link between the course work being described the exposition

in print will work to the benefit of the author in terms of recognition.

4. Do you have any reactions which are specific to the sections of TE--"Reflections, Teaching Profiles and Contemporary Course Descriptions, Images of the Field, Reviews"?

-No strong negative reactions through some of the material it may give the appearance of being a bit self promotional. In this connection I would prefer to see the focus redirected at promising ideas and practices.

-Like the variety of sections. Photography makes journal come alive. Give sense of history to education.

-Profiles are a wonderful historical contribution. I like the images of the field by noted scholars of the past.

Appendix B

Teaching Education: Survey of Contributors

1. Comment on the mechanics of TE's publications: schedule, length, design, etc.
 - I suspect that TE is the "glossiest" education journal I receive. Its design, layout, typography and illustrations are of top quality. It is probably a silly question but one might ask: "Does TE have to be this "glossy" and what's the cost? I.e., could it be expanded substantively, have its wide margins reduced, and still maintain the same quality? Presently, the "mechanics" of TE are of good book quality; is a price being paid for that?
 - Length is somewhat of a problem, though given the number of articles you understandably seek to publish, it is appropriate. Perhaps some longer pieces would be accommodated.
 - Format makes TE look like a less scholarly publication than it actually is. The binding came apart on mine.
 - Good considering the very limited budget. Design is the most aesthetic in the history of educational literature--and probably the future as well.
2. How do you judge the content of TE, both in terms of scholarship and usefulness for colleagues?
 - A very excellent contribution, it treats subjects that are often overlooked.
 - The scholarship in TE is clearly of high quality. As to its usefulness to colleagues, I am uncertain. I find the two issues to be very interesting and I have enjoyed reading them. Whether they are "useful" is difficult to judge, especially for colleagues.
 - It is somewhat scholarly, but very interesting reading which is refreshing and thought provoking. I would not classify it as "scholarly" but "stimulating" is a better word.
 - I think it appeals to a group of teacher educators who are more reflective though it has something to offer all.
 - Interesting to read, students love the pictures.
 - TE is a unique journal, one that is committed to the personal and specific discussion of teaching education, with a strong historical dimension. Thus I think it

represents an unusual kind of scholarship but a kind that I find very useful. This is one of the few journals I read when it arrives (rather than to check articles of interest).

-So far it seems excellent. I hope that it will not be too difficult to steer a mid course between how to and esoteric research.

3. Will your work in TE be of benefit to you in tenure, promotion, or salary deliberations?

-I suppose I hope it will. I was most gratified by being published in a journal I feel is truly innovative.

-As a citation it will be a factor in salary increase.

-If you're asking whether TE represents "real" scholarship I suppose that's hard to know. Not only is TE new, but it also represents an unusual style of scholarship. One thing that adds to TE's credibility is its publication on manuscripts by well known people.

-No, I am beyond that and have been for quite some time. I don't write nor do I have to write for tenure, promotions, or salary increments--Thank Heaven.

4. Do you have any reactions which are specific to the sections of TE "Reflections, Teaching Profiles and Contemporary Course Descriptions, Images of the Field, Reviews?"

-I look forward to all of them and they seem to get even better as more issues come out.

-I like them all and nothing like them exist in any systematic way, especially the underlined ones (Teaching Profiles, Cont. Courses Description)

-These are all very informative and challenging in ideas, reviews are genuinely informative and helpful.

-I believe in direct contact. Do you have an editorial board? Have each member contact three colleagues. Can you send samples with personal letters? Also ask them to get library subscriptions. Display at conferences, special intro. offers. Require authors to subscribe. Give people copies to distribute to other colleagues with a subscription card.